

The next issue of CHALLENGE will appear in three weeks, after which we will resume our regular biweekly schedule.

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CHALLENGE



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EVICT THE PROFIT SYSTEM!



INGLEWOOD, CA, December 30—Only a system as ruthless as capitalism would put a family out on the street in the middle of a raging pandemic. With the ICU beds at zero percent availability, LA is a dangerous place to contract Covid-19 right now, yet that is exactly what happened to one of the family members because of this eviction. Through the class struggle, fighters are learning the profit system cannot and will not provide for our class. Only we can do that through communist revolution.

Members of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) have united with a working-class family to reclaim their home from a blood-thirsty mortgage company attempting to make a quick buck off of racist gentrification. PLers are fighting tooth and nail to hold on to the home stolen from this working-class family, but that will not stop the next family from being evicted. Capitalism is a system that will always put profits over people.

In the 55 years PLP has existed, many inspiring struggles have been waged, some won and some lost. Regardless of the reform outcome, we see glimmers of hope of the communist future we are fighting for! This struggle is no different.

Here to stay

When three young women boldly defied eviction orders under threat of arrest and brutality by the police, we can see the seeds of what we are building. On Friday, December 18, these women leaders, one as young as 17, confidently walked up the front steps, entered their home, and turned on all the lights—their commitment to fight back writ-

ten on their t-shirts – “HERE TO STAY!”

In the background, they were heralded with cheers from those assembled at the house in support. Campaign participants posted signs of protest around the house, put up Christmas lights, and brought in food and other necessities for the family.

The mother of the family who we are working with bought the family home in 2006 with two mortgages, one very large, the other much smaller. This immigrant family found ways to piece together money and never missed a mortgage payment for 14 years. In 2012, the mother was scammed into believing that she no longer had to make payments on the smaller mortgage.

Then in 2016, Trojan Capital Investment, LLC (Trojan) purchased the smaller mortgage and immediately sent her a “default” notice. It was no coincidence that the notice was sent soon after the announcement that the SoFi football stadium would be built in Inglewood just a few miles away from the family’s home.

The working-class connection

On November 30, the mother and her three teenage children, two of whom attend the school where one of our PLP comrades teaches, were evicted from their home by the LA Sheriff and Inglewood Police Department (IPD). The mother contacted a non-profit community organization that she had worked with. The non-profit in turn contacted a local tenants’ union that two PLP members have been working in for the last two years. The non-profit, together with tenants’ union members, immediately

began a campaign to save the house for the family.

The eviction came just as Governor Gavin Newsom was issuing a “safer-at-home” advisory because of a huge increase in Covid-19 cases. Los Angeles County already has the second largest homeless population in the U.S. and the crisis has only worsened during this pandemic. The 2020 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count showed 66,436 people in LA county experienced homelessness, which is a 12.7 percent rise from last year (Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, 6/12/2020).

Our regular involvement in mass organizations and in our schools has created an opportunity for our Party to be a part of this struggle, which represents a broader struggle against the horrors of racist, anti-working class gentrification and homelessness. This fightback is a testament to PLP’s commitment to building a mass Party and fighting among the masses in the workplace, schools, and community organizations.

Working class fights back against eviction

The immediate goal of the reform campaign is to get Trojan to negotiate the return of the family’s home. There have been many positive aspects to the campaign so far. The tenants’ union has many young workers who have an understanding of the racist, sexist, and murderous aspects of the capitalist system.

Several members have gone “all in” on the fight back, doing multiple shifts to guard the house 24/7 from the IPD, taking the lead on canvassing in the neighborhood to get support from workers, and planning political education activities involving the family and supporters.

The tenant’s union has brought to bear its experience fighting racist gentrification at an apartment complex located across the street from SoFi, where tenants’ rents have skyrocketed. The commonality in the two struggles shows that working-class renters and homeowners have the same class interests.

Other PLP members have also actively participated in the campaign. We highlighted the dual role of the cops—they are racist terrorists who intimidate and murder our sisters and brothers while simultaneously work as thugs for businesses like Trojan, which add workers to the homeless population in order to cash in on their investments. In other words, the police serve and protect the profit system.

When the united working class exercises its political power through the might of one international Party, we can eliminate the profit motive for racism, homelessness, gentrification, and killer cops. No reform can ever accomplish that—only communist revolution can. ✪

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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OUR FIGHT

- ★Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.
- ★The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today’s world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.
- ★Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world’s workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.
- ★While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim “communism is dead,” capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.
- ★Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society’s benefits and burdens.
- ★Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of “race.” Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.
- ★Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.
- ★Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.
- ★Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion’s false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.
- ★Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP’s criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a “following” around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual’s writing of an article.

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Editorial

Combat capitalist contagion with communist fightback

On December 20, in suburban Indiana, Dr. Susan Moore, a Black woman, died of racism after doctors dismissed and refused to treat her Covid-19 symptoms and severe pain. Meanwhile, in South Africa, a factory is producing millions of doses of lifesaving vaccines for the U.S. and other wealthy nations in Europe, but none for the poor Black people who work and live there—and who have been hit harder by the pandemic than in any other country on the continent. With racism and exploitation as its lifeblood, this capitalist profit system infects and sickens everything it touches. Progressive Labor Party calls for workers to vaccinate our class against the contagion of capitalism with the only medicine that really works: communist revolution (see box, page 3). Build the fight to build a need-based and collective system! Join Progressive Labor Party!

Capitali\$t healthcare: pay or die

Because big pharmaceutical companies like Pfizer are driven by their need for maximum profit, they won’t suspend “intellectual property rights” to their vaccine. As a result, “most people in low-income countries will be waiting until 2024 for Covid-19 vaccinations if high-income countries keep engaging in what some are calling “vaccinationalism” (Duke Global Health Institute, 11/9/20).

After centuries of looting workers in Africa, Asia, and South America, the imperialist countries have cleared the shelves. “Over half (51%) of the doses reserved will go to high-income countries, despite the fact those countries only represent 14% of the world’s population” (Forbes, 12/15/20).

In falling-in-a-frenzy powers like the U.S., vaccines have been trapped in a muck of anti-scientific skepticism, money-mad competition, and individualism. The bosses’ allergy to science reflects broader capitalist decay. Finance capital, the dominant wing of the U.S. ruling class, is using the vaccine to attempt to buy back workers’ trust in its failing institutions—a must as they prepare for global war against China and perhaps Russia.

Medical apartheid, global scale

The international working class is justifiably mistrustful of medical science. There is a long racist history of Black, Latin, and Asian workers being forced or coerced into dangerous mistreatment. White workers are also hurt because racism weakens the health of the entire working class:

- **Jamaica, 1760s:** British doctor John Quier experimented with smallpox inoculations (a precursor to vaccines) on 850 enslaved people, including pregnant women and sick infants.
- **Alabama, U.S., 1830s:** Enslaver J. Marion Sims, “father of gynecology,” operated on enslaved women without anesthesia. He shared the racist belief that Black people didn’t experience pain like white people, a myth that infects doctors to this day (The Washington Post, 7/11/2020)—as Susan Moore attested before they killed her.
- **Namibia, 1900s:** In line with his call to ban “mixed marriages,” Eugen Fischer sterilized the descendants of European-born fathers and Black mothers. He later joined the German Nazi party and performed medical atrocities in the fascist death camps.
- **Alabama, U.S., 1930-1970s:** In the infamous Tuskegee study of untreated syphilis, 600 Black men were left to sicken and die, even after a cure was found.
- **Puerto Rico and Massachusetts, 1950s:** During a period of eugenicist legislation and forced steri-

lization, two Harvard professors tested a birth control pill in the slums of Puerto Rico and asylums in Massachusetts. Women’s uterus were sliced to “understand the drug’s effect on ovulation” (The Crimson, 9/28/17).

- **Côte d’Ivoire and Thailand, 1990s:** HIV treatment was withheld from men, women, and newborns.
- **India, 2005-2017:** Nearly 5,000 mainly low-caste workers died in drug trials and research (The National, 9/17/18).

Covid-19 has once again exposed medical racism. It’s no accident that deaths are highest among Black, Latin, Asian, indigenous, undocumented, imprisoned, indigenous, and poor workers. They are the most vulnerable to exposure and infection from racist inequalities in healthcare, jobs, housing, and food quality. Because of capitalism, they are the most likely to have underlying conditions like diabetes and heart disease.

Ruling-class chaos breeds skepticism

Under outgoing Racist-in-Chief Donald Trump, anti-scientists seized control of nearly every corner of U.S. policy, from the environment to public health. But the main wing finance capitalists also bear responsibility for many workers’ lack of confidence in the new vaccines. Chief medical advisor Anthony Fauci initially cautioned against wearing masks—an outright lie to cover for the bosses’ shortage of protective equipment—before calling for their mass use. Before endorsing the vaccine, President-elect Joe Biden initially sounded warnings against it as politically motivated and rushed to benefit Trump (NYT, 9/16/20).

The latest polls say that more than a quarter of the U.S. population remains hesitant to get the vaccine. Skepticism is highest among Republicans at 42 percent, followed by Black adults at 35 percent (KFF.org), though these numbers may be decreasing as more people get vaccinated. From the data we have so far (see box, page 3), it seems clear that the vaccine is safe and effective—if only because the capitalist bosses need a healthy working class to stem their economy’s hemorrhaging of billions of dollars. Ultimately, the U.S. empire is at stake.

Collectivity over individualism, science over subjectivity

The Kaiser Family Foundation poll also monitored workers’ attitudes toward collectivity. Half of those questioned believe that getting vaccinated is “part of everyone’s responsibility to protect the health of others.” But the other half believe it is “a personal choice.” This is the virus of individualism, the mythology of capitalist “freedom” that acts against workers’ own interests. The collective comes first. Our decisions must be based on the needs of the entire working class.

For communists and their friends and comrades, it is necessary to educate ourselves on how vaccines work and why they are crucial to the well-being of our class. Just as we approach strikes and reform struggles as schools for communism, we must fight for the health of our working-class brothers and sisters while exposing the rulers’ racism and profiteering.

As long as we live in a capitalist system, pandemics are inevitable. But herd immunity is a step toward communism. Workers must be healthy and fit to battle against the racist and sexist atrocities to come. We must fight for a communist revolution that will make workers’ collective health primary. ☸

Lessons from the fight against racist hospital closure

CHICAGO, December 22—On December 15, a state review board voted against the racist proposal to close Mercy Hospital on Chicago’s south side. Mercy is a safety-net hospital, the city’s oldest, that treats majority uninsured and underinsured Black and Latin workers.

The board’s decision came as the result of hundreds of workers, patients, and community members organizing for months to oppose the closure. We have participated in rallies and caravans, blocked intersections, shared petitions, and gave countless speeches and testimonies as a means to prevent this racist attack on workers in the middle of the deadly coronavirus pandemic. Members of the international communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) have been active fighters in this struggle.

But as workers already know, this fight is by no means over. The racist billionaire owners of Mercy, Trinity Health, are already plotting in the wake of the ruling to move ahead with the closure.

The time is now to broaden the base of this struggle, and to include even more workers into the fight. It’s essential that we look past pleading with liberal politicians to guarantee a healthy future for our class, because they’ve only proven themselves to fail and attack us, time and again. It’s time to reject this capitalist system that fails billions of workers daily around the globe, and start organizing for an egalitarian communist future with PLP.

Lesson 1: Trust no capitalist politician

During the campaign to keep Mercy open, a strategy has been to try and create leverage and pressure on some of the leading politicians in the city and state. To this end, there have been regular appeals made to Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, Cook County Board chief Toni Preckwinkle, and Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker. But like their Republican counterparts, these pro-capitalist lackeys are no friends of workers.

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot has been silent on the struggle, claiming that decisions regarding hospital closures are more of a “state issue.” No doubt she has her hands full, trying to perform damage control after video was released of the racist Chicago Police Department (CPD) handcuffing Black worker Anjanette Young while naked in her home, during a botched raid (ABC7, 12/21).

In this regard, she follows in the footsteps of her predecessor, Rahm Emanuel, who similarly covered up the dashcam video of CPD’s racist execution of Black teenager LaQuan McDonald until after his re-election was secured in 2015. One of his first moves after getting into office was to close half of the city’s mental health clinics, which served mostly Black and Latin workers (Chicago Tribune, 6/6/19).

State Governor JB Pritzker has admittedly been more vocal about Mercy, but workers have no reason to trust his “progressive” credentials. His family is one of the ten richest in the U.S., at an estimated worth of over 30 billion (Forbes, 12/16). This massive fortune was gained through the direct exploitation of countless workers.

Lastly, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle has made a reputation of being



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a queen of cuts, and is actually in the process of phasing out emergency services at Provident, another safety-net hospital on the south side (South Side Weekly, 11/27). This is in line with her decision almost 10 years ago to close Oak Forest Hospital in spite of worker protest (WBEZ, 8/16/11).

All politicians, regardless of race, at the end of the day are loyal to the needs of this racist profit system. We should not expect a different outcome in trusting them with Mercy’s fate.

Lesson 2: Capitalist health care will never meet our needs

As healthcare workers, we have witnessed firsthand some of the worst racist destruction of this pandemic that has killed over 1.5 million workers worldwide, including over 300,000 in the U.S. Yet despite continued surges in cases and facilities overflowing with patients, the healthcare bosses still have gone ahead and closed over 20 hospitals nationwide this year (Becker’s, 12/9).

Healthcare under capitalism is a commodity, a service to be used in order to turn a profit. Actual outcomes in guaranteeing that we as workers lead healthy lives take a back seat to the bosses’ pocketbooks. With this in mind, it makes sense that Trinity Health would want to move ahead with closing Mercy despite having assets in the billions. Capitalism is about maximizing profits and market share.

Paired with a threadbare public health infrastructure in the city, these hospital cuts prove deadly for Black and Latin workers, whose life expectancy can average a shocking 30 years less than those living in wealthier neighborhoods (AP News, 6/6/19).

If the international working class is ever to reach our true health potential, we need to rid ourselves of this racist destructive system. Only a communist society based on collectivity and worker needs – not profit – can guarantee true health equity

Final lesson: Join PLP, fight for communism

Those of us who have committed ourselves to the fight to keep Mercy open have much to be proud about. We have for the time being forced the bosses to pump the brakes on closing, an outcome that will no doubt save workers’ lives.

But with all reform struggles, the bosses hold the upper hand. They hold state power and as such can take away our hard fought gains.

The only way the bosses can’t quickly reverse the outcome is if workers build an international mass movement to forcibly take state power from them and run a communist society in our interests. It’s been done before, and through organizing a mass revolutionary PLP, we will do it again. PLP invites all workers to join our fight to build a better world.✊

The mRNA Covid-19 vaccine explained

The Progressive Labor Party hails the development of vaccines and urges workers to take what is demonstrating to be a safe and effective shot against Covid-19.

Unfortunately, the racist, profit-driven capitalist medical system heightens our fears and mistrust even when scientists get it right. In fact, research on mRNA (short for messenger RNA) vaccines began in the early 1990s. Scientists have tested these vaccines in both animals and people for SARS, MERS, Ebola, Zika, and rabies (Harvard Health Publishing, 12/10/2020). *The Covid-19 vaccine is not the result of speedy experiments.*

In a nutshell, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines mimic a part of the surface of the Covid-19 virus called the spike. A harmless fragment of viral spike proteins primes our immune system to attack and ward off the disease in the event of exposure. **There is no virus in the vaccine.** Together, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines tested nearly 30,000 people. They’ve demonstrated 95 percent efficacy in preventing Covid-19, with virtually no serious side effects aside from a few cases of rare and treatable allergies. For a video explaining how the vac-

cine works, go to www.tinyurl.com/asap-sciencecovid

The subjects in clinical trials have been mainly white men; only 5 percent are Black (Healthline, 8/9/20). In fact, community outreach groups have reached out to Black volunteers to make the study more inclusive and representative of the population. Fighting for equitable research is part of the antiracist fight.

Since Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on Black and Latin workers, from death rates to unemployment, they should have priority for vaccination. Fighting for equitable distribution is also part of the antiracist fight.

Judging from the long history of vaccines, long-term ill effects are unlikely. Local reactions at the injection site are common. Fatigue and fever are more common after the second dose. Most people experience sore arms and little or nothing more.

No medication is 100 percent safe. But with 82 million Covid-19 cases and over 1.8 million confirmed deaths worldwide (Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, 12/30/20), the vaccines’ benefits far outweigh their risks.

The struggle at CUNY: revolution or reform?

The following article is for the PLP college forum, CUNY Needs Communism on January 16, from 12:00 - 2:00 PM. Zoom Room: 892 4536 9401. Contact your local PLP member for the password.

The City University of New York (CUNY) students and staff are all in the cross hairs of the racist profit system. The Covid-19 pandemic and the massive uprising against racist police murders have exposed the vicious inequality of capitalism. For workers, capitalist education has always meant some training to keep the profits flowing for their bosses and a lot of brainwashing to convince workers to believe in the system. With the system in crisis, the rulers in disarray, and imperialist China challenging the U.S. bosses, public “education” like CUNY has become just a holding pen for working class youth. Very soon we will be cannon fodder in the next imperialist world war.

Our 300,000 CUNY students are overwhelmingly Black, Latin and Asian and 53 percent have to work. We are healthcare, food delivery and essential workers. Many have lost our jobs and family members.

Thousands of CUNY staff have also lost jobs; hundreds have lost health insurance!

The CUNY bosses have cut class sections and increased class sizes.

Democratic Governor Cuomo is withholding 20 percent of CUNY’s state funding, while 118 New York State billionaires have increased their wealth by over \$77 billion!

This is the racist destruction that politicians like Trump and Cuomo have inflicted on us! But that’s

the capitalist system that will always put profit over workers’ needs. That’s why we need communism where multiracial workers, students and soldiers, across all borders, unite in building an egalitarian society whose sole purpose is to meet the needs of the international working class. That is what the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) is fighting for.

Capitalists use CUNY to serve their needs

CUNY serves the interests of the ruling class, who own the wealth and control the government. They promote the idea that if you don’t go to college or don’t graduate it’s your fault. They control CUNY through the Board of Trustees, who appoint the college presidents and Chancellor. These racist, ruling class agents enjoy high six-figure salaries and 5-figure housing allowances, while adjunct professors and students face hunger and eviction. They want us to be conscientious, loyal workers now, and conscientious, loyal soldiers soon. That’s their plan for higher education! Every struggle at CUNY clashes repeatedly with this racist ruling class.

PLP’s plan is that students learn how to fight for a communist, egalitarian world; skills developed by organizing anti-racist struggles on campus for things like free tuition and improved services. The rulers don’t want workers and students to think beyond this system where a small class of billionaires runs society for their own benefit. But we fight racism with our eyes on the prize of a communist world run by and for the working class.

The summer of mass uprising against racism: On to revolution!

Over the summer many CUNY students and workers joined the mass uprising against racist police terror. The bosses need the police to terrorize us into accepting a future of racism, poverty and war. Many of us also protested against the CUNY cutbacks. Meanwhile health care workers demonstrated for personal protective equipment and against hospital closings. Transit workers, teachers and students fought for safe working and learning conditions. Many antiracists called for defunding the police. All of these antiracist organizers and fighters should be running the world. We need to get rid of the billionaires that run the world now. Join us in the fight for communism, a world run by and for the working class.

Build a base for antiracist fight-back at CUNY

Comrades at CUNY have been active in the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) union, waging many struggles and protests for improved conditions for students and faculty. We have organized against racist police brutality and ROTC and CIA programs that bolster U.S. occupations abroad and prepare for war with China. Through the PSC International Committee, we organized international solidarity with workers and students in Colombia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Haiti, India and South Africa.

Members of PLP are working in the PSC Delegate Assembly, and campus chapters and committees. We are also in the more radical Rank and File

Continued page 6

Smash MTA cuts with worker-rider unity & communism

NEW YORK CITY, December 30—When capitalism is in crisis, it’s workers who sacrifice for the bosses’ profit system. Not only have the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) bosses allowed COVID-19 to steal the lives of over 140 transit workers but they are pushing to layoff roughly 9,000 workers (NYT, 12/16/20). These are attacks on the entire working class. These cuts will especially hurt Black and immigrant workers hardest, who will disproportionately suffer the 40 percent service reductions (NYT, 12/16/20), the crowded trains and buses, and increasing COVID cases.

Though the bosses have temporarily delayed voting on these racist cuts, with the government’s COVID stimulus bill setting aside \$4 billion for MTA funding (Curbed, 12/21/2020), it means nothing in the long run.

The Progressive Labor Party (PLP) says make the bosses take the losses. These types of disasters are only possible because we live under capitalism, because the ruling class puts profits first and workers’ lives are dead last. This is why we in PLP fight for communism, so that profits, and the concept of money are eliminated, and where workers’ needs are the first priority.

‘Doomsday cuts’

MTA bosses have repeatedly claimed in recent months that they need to enact these racist cuts on workers because of their income losses from the pandemic. For starters, the bosses discussed eliminating unlimited subway passes and raising prices for single metrocards. On top of pre-planned fare increases, this measure would put even more hardship on the mainly Black and Latin workers who’ve had more than enough attacks.

The ruling-class media, no friend to riders, has backed these arguments as feasible ways to save the subways and buses. Another proposal includes switching all subway trains to One Person Train Operation (OPTO). This is a system which removes conductors (who open and close the train’s doors from its middle), leaving only the train operator to perform that duty while also moving the train. A recent Op-Ed by Connor Harris, a shill for the racist

think tank Manhattan Institute, argued that getting rid of subway conductors could save the MTA \$300 million (City and State New York, 9/16/2020). The New York Times, another capitalist mouthpiece, followed suit with the same suggestion last month (NYT, 12/16/2020).

With half of the 55,000 MTA workers Black, laying off thousands of conductors during record unemployment levels is viciously racist — and incredibly dangerous for workers riding the MTA. OPTO supporters argue that the company needs to simply install cameras for train operators to perform this function. However, many stations in the NYC subway system are on a slope, and/or are on curves; this means blind spots that cameras can’t catch. Worse, this would increase strain on the train operator position, forcing them to do even more work. Eliminating positions and combining their functions with others is a hallmark of the bosses.

As expected, virtually none of these “experts” mentioned the true culprit behind the MTA’s money issues, pandemic or not: its perennial billions in debt to Wall Street bankers, from decades of letting the system fall into disrepair.

Union surrenders; workers must fight!

The union has done little to prepare the rank and file for a fightback, with the Transit Workers’ Union Local 100 issuing only a vague flyer warning the MTA they won’t renegotiate the contract or accept any layoffs.

Despite months of “doomsday cuts,” Local 100 didn’t even bother organizing any rallies or demonstrations outside MTA HQ at 2 Broadway. All they did was phone in a half-effort video response to the bosses when the cuts were supposed to be voted on. Former Local 100 president (now president of TWU international) John Samuelson recently proposed taxing NYC workers for their online purchases as a way to raise funds! (NYdailynews, 12/7/20)

In another union meeting, a comrade spoke out against the union president having a press conference with the union president of police during the fight for justice for George Floyd. The union reps

were silent and one of their stooges tried defending them. Another worker quickly shut him down saying it was disgusting for union president Tony Utano to even be seen with a racist like Patrick Lynch. The union stooges replied “they don’t wanna get involved in politics.”

These union misleaders are in the practice of turning a blind eye to racism, and are in bed with the MTA bosses attacking the workers, leaving us with the best choice there is: uniting and fighting back.

Communism will be doomsday for racism and capitalism

Comrades in transit are sharing our communist line with our coworkers. Self critically, we’ve been reluctant due to our lack of confidence in the working class to fight back under these attacks. It’s easy to give in to cynicism, especially now during the pandemic

But that is what the ruling class wants. They want us fearful, dependent on them and divided. We must remember that even amid great division and difficult odds workers have always united and fought back.

History is on our side. In 1918, the Bolsheviks seized power in the midst of World War I and the “Spanish Flu” pandemic. During the 1930s, when the U.S. was suffering through the Great Depression, the Bolsheviks were blazing a new future, eradicating famines and diseases with their worker-run state. This and more is possible when we expand our confidence in the working class and continue to fight back and build for a communist future. We will continue building the fightback in the MTA, and will follow up with the antiracist fighter who spoke out.

Unity between transit workers and riders is needed more than ever. Transit workers and commuting workers can beat back the bosses when we come together, and unite to build communism: where workers run the transit system and all society without billionaire rulers. Make the bosses take the losses! Join the PLP and fight for communism!✊

Antiracist art

Elizabeth Catlett: From the masses, to the masses

Elizabeth Catlett, a Black artist and teacher, drew inspiration from the working-class struggles of her family and neighbors and from the long history of multiracial struggles for civil rights and egalitarianism. She urged all Black artists to contribute to the fight against racism through their subject matter, to shun segregated exhibitions, and to make art that would reach a broad audience. In a 1961 speech to the National Congress of Negro Artists in Washington, D.C., in the spirit of the communist principle, “from the masses, to the masses,” Catlett said: “If we are to reach the mass of Negro people with our art, we must learn from them; then let us seek inspiration in the Negro people – a principal and never-ending source.”

Catlett’s own art consisted of semi-abstract figural sculptures, large and small, and prints, either linotypes or lithographs. Her sculptures, carved from wood or stone or cast in bronze, deemphasize details to indicate monumental heads, powerful bodies, and, on occasion, clenched fists. In one moving political work, *Homage to My Young Black Sisters* (1968), a female figure lifts her head and raises her fist in the international gesture of solidarity. Some of Catlett’s large sculpture pieces can be found in public spaces, like *Olmec Bather* at the National Polytechnical Institute in Mexico City or *People of Atlanta* in Atlanta’s City Hall.

In her prints, Catlett created powerful images of Black people and also workers in Mexico, where she lived for many years. *Sharecropper* (1970) depicts a white-haired Black woman with strongly chiseled features and a straw hat, looking up and over her shoulder. The color linotype *Malcolm X Speaks for Us* (1969) reflects Catlett’s identification with the civil rights struggles of the times. Other subjects include Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Thurgood Marshall, Frederick Douglass, and Phillis Wheatley, the African-born poet who was enslaved in Boston and died in poverty at the age of 31.

A Passionate Teacher

Catlett was born in Washington in 1915, in the heart of Jim Crow racism, the daughter of a public school teacher and a truant officer. Her father died before she was born. Catlett planned to attend the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh for an art degree, but her scholarship was revoked when the administration discovered she was Black. She wound up studying design and painting at Howard, the historically Black university, with financial help from her mother until a scholarship came through. After earning her Masters of Fine Arts at the University of Iowa, she taught briefly at a college in Texas and then directed the art department at Dillard University, the leading Black college in New Orleans. Teaching would be her lifelong passion.

In 1941, the year she married fellow artist Charles White, Catlett’s career took off with a first prize at the American Negro Exposition for her sculpture, *Mother and Child*. The couple moved to New York, where Catlett studied with Ossip Zadkine, a Russian-born French émigré, who urged her to adopt a more modernist, simplified style, and to approach art from a “humanistic international viewpoint.”

Later she explained that her approach was to begin with her personal experiences in the U.S. and then “be projected towards international understanding, as our blues and spirituals do. They are our experience[s], but they are understood and felt everywhere” (Romare Bearden and Henry Henderson, *A History of African American Artists from 1792 to the Present*, 1993).

After a teaching stint at Hampton Institute in Virginia, Catlett made a political leap upon returning to New York, where she joined the George Washington Carver School, a left-leaning community art center, run on a shoestring, that filled the vacuum after the government’s Works Progress Administration (WPA) art centers folded in the early 1940s.

For two years she taught sculpture and dress-



making. Like so many organizations fighting racist segregation in that era, the Washington Carver School folded under pressure from anti-communists. But working with the poor, proud, and struggling people of Harlem made a lasting impression on Catlett.

Collectivity and Struggle in Mexico

In 1946, Catlett and White moved to Mexico, where she embarked on “Negro Women,” a series of 15 linocuts. She took up printmaking with the Taller de Gráfica Popular, a collective of communist and progressive artists, and studied the work of the great Mexican muralists: Diego Rivera, David Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco. After divorcing White, Catlett married painter and printmaker Francisco Mora and settled into life in Mexico. She raised three sons and thrived in working collectively with other artists. As she’d recall, “I learned that art is not something that people learn to do individually, that who does it is not important, but its use and its effects on people are what is most important.” Later Catlett joined the faculty of the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de

Mexico (UNAM), where she became head of the sculpture department until her retirement in 1976.

Always attuned to workers’ struggles, Catlett moved within communist artistic and literary circles in Mexico City. In 1949, as she later told a member of Progressive Labor Party, she joined with striking railroad workers and their communist supporters. Subsequently she found herself harassed by the Mexican government, which hunted U.S. expatriates considered by the F.B.I. to be “subversives.” One night, when one of her sons was ill and her husband was out giving a concert, Mexican officials barged into her home and took her in for questioning. She spent two nights in detention before her release.

After Catlett became a Mexican citizen in the early 1960s, the U.S. government refused to issue her a visa to re-enter the U.S., a ban that wasn’t lifted until 1971, for her major exhibition at the Studio Museum in Harlem. Nevertheless, she was a continued presence in the U.S. through her art, her participation in exhibitions, and her large following. Through her death in 2012, in Cuernavaca, Mexico, Catlett never faltered in her opposition to segregation, her fightback against racism, and her championing of working-class women and men. 🌟

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.



I know that paper!

“I know that paper. You’re with Progressive Labor Party?! I used to sell that paper in Boston”, a young Black man and woman said. Even though I was the only one selling the paper on this particular night during an Alex Flores fight back in LA, and I changed my location multiple times that evening, I happened to be in the right place at the right time to run into some former close friends (and hopefully future members) of the Party.

We exchanged numbers and they want to attend our next meeting. After we talked, they drove past the protest. The young woman shook one fist in the air, raising CHALLENGE up high with the other, as the driver fiercely honked.

There are so many things that had to line up perfectly for us to run into each other. Some would say that our meeting was “meant to be” or just call it serendipity. While chance definitely played a role, I am writing this letter to point out the necessity of being out there and doing the day to day work for these coincidental meet-ups to occur. Or as dialectical materialism would call it: change and necessity.

Comrades in Boston are on the ground every day organizing among the working class. This is why these young Black workers know about us in the first place. Comrades in Los Angeles are on the ground every day organizing among the working class. This is why these young Black workers hopefully will fight alongside us again. We are talking about an international movement here! The more we are engaged in spreading our vision

for a communist world, the more these seemingly chance encounters will occur. What we do is necessary and it counts! Let’s fight every day to do it more and do it better!

★★★★★

LA: Need collective tenant fightback

I have been camping out in Ynes Torres’ home for a few days now. In that time span, I have met with tenants, volunteers, unhoused workers, and organizers from Hawthorne, Santa Clarita, Long Beach and even Orange County. We have discussed strategies in how to fight back against racist gentrification and evictions.

One Black tenant discussed anti-Blackness in Hawthorne and the desperation in trying to set up a tenants’ union in a unit as well as fighting racist harassment from white supremacists littered all over the Beach Cities in LA County. Another tenant discussed mass evictions that happened last month in El Sereno, East LA. Dozens of families were booted out of these houses that fell into disrepair because the California Department of Transportation neglected them. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) cracked down on housing rights organizers and got them out one by one.

Hearing these stories reminds me of the time I spent at the Black Unity Encampment at City Hall in Downtown LA. Black Unity was a Black-led autonomous zone modeled in the spirit of the Seattle Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone. The camp fought off the cops for five months before succumbing to a night raid right at midnight. To add insult to injury the cops sealed off the campsite to prevent any reclamation of the camp. It was very disheartening because the group spent such hard work trying to build a new community and provided a space for discussing issues such as decolonization and creating new societies. Black Unity was isolated in Downtown LA, so this made them easy targets for the state to pick off.

All is not lost though! The state may have crushed Black Unity, but seeing many communities coming out for this mother of six shows that we are not alone. Both of these struggles are inspiring and when we bring the Progressive Labor Party’s line to the forefront, they can also be powerful! We need to continue to stand together...neighbor to neighbor, neighborhood to neighborhood...and show that only communism can create free, safe housing for the masses without the need for monetary exchange.

★★★★★

Every fight counts

I’ve lived in Stephen Crane Village in Newark, NJ for 25 years. It is a low-income public housing com-

plex that consists of mostly Black and Latin residents with many elderly/disabled tenants. For years, we’ve been subjected to inhumane conditions due to management’s neglect—from frequent infestations of rodents, roaches and bedbugs to mold and water that reeks of chlorine and sewage that we have to bathe, cook and clean with. My mother’s health is dire, so we requested a move to a one level place so she can recover. She is currently hospitalized, yet management continues to stall the move.

Working with my comrades, I made demands for repairs which were met—small but important victories. Reading CHALLENGE’s article about the Oakland housing fightback inspired me to organize with my fellow tenants to fight for our housing rights and keep public housing public!

★★★★★

The devastation of Hurricane Iota

The passage of Hurricane Iota has left death, flooding and desolation in its wake. In Central America and Colombia, on the island of San Andrés y Providencia and Sana Catalina, there was near total destruction. In the rest of the country, the rains have increased by 80%, driving landslides, floods, loss of crops, death of workers and animals. The destruction is not predicted to slow until the end of November.

It can seem as if workers have no way out. If we are not killed by some plague or poverty, we face natural catastrophes like this or the rainy season or the El Niño phenomenon. The capitalists have no plan to protect workers from any of these, as they try to make us believe that nature is inevitably cruel against us.

But the truth is that the racist capitalist system is the culprit, because all natural resources are turned into merchandise. They do not mind poisoning the water, as long as they convert the fields in a way that satisfies the greed of the market. Even as they throw workers in danger, the capitalist bosses deny global warming produced by the burning of fossil fuels. They do not compromise, and laugh at the most vulnerable.

In the absence of class consciousness and an understanding of dialectical materialism -- the international working class’s key tool for deep analysis for any situation --everything can seem unchanging and without a culprit. Progressive Labor Party must redouble its efforts to achieve clarity with our working class sisters and brothers of the roots of this destruction. Through mass growth of the Party we will make revolution for the construction of an egalitarian communist world that will put an end to the shame and death of capitalism.

★★★★★

The CUNY struggle: revolution or reform?

Continued from page 4

Action and CUNY Struggle.

We work with the University Student Senate and radical student groups like Free CUNY. We are working to build a mass movement to fight racist attacks on public higher education.

We realize that we are up against the entire capitalist system, and need to take down their cops, courts and politicians with a massive multiracial working-class uprising. We fight for that vision of workers’ power, to overthrow the bosses who control every aspect of social life, including colleges.

Fight for reforms, promote revolution

As long as the bosses hold state power, any concessions we win are temporary. The strategy of reforming the racist profit system, of making it serve our needs, is like running on a treadmill: we fight, the bosses take back, on and on.

The victory of Open Admissions won by Black and Latin students in the 1960s has long since been

replaced by a system of ever-rising tuition, and many students who never graduate.

The 1960s also saw struggles against racism and sexism in college curriculums. But as long as the capitalists control CUNY, they force the curriculums to serve their ideology. Recently they are promoting divisive identity politics, certainly not militant, multiracial, working class unity.

CUNY adjuncts recently won pay raises and three-year assignments. They are already facing layoffs and “postponed” pay raises.

We are still on that reform treadmill, suffering with racist, sexist curriculums, slashed budgets, rising tuition, students without support, and underpaid adjuncts. We keep fighting. But as we fight for jobs, healthcare, housing, food, education, and against police terror, our main goal is building the movement for communist revolution.

Join PLP! Fight against racist CUNY cutbacks! Fight for communism!

Communist revolution means the seizure of state power by the working class through mass,

armed struggle. Communism means abolishing social classes, wages, profit and private ownership. It means outlawing racism, nationalism, sexism and borders. It means the destruction of the capitalist class and their whole way of running the world. It means a communist system of production, based solely on meeting the needs of the international working class.

Communist ways of thinking and ways of relating to one another will be developed among millions of workers, soldiers and youth on the road to revolution. Whatever victories we might win by protesting or even going on strike, the growth of the revolutionary movement and a mass PLP would be the lasting victory. Communist rethinking of education is one very exciting aspect of building a communist world! This is very different from how to win open admissions, free tuition, or even full financial support for every student. The question for revolutionaries is not what we want from a capitalist state founded on sexism and racism, but what we want education to be in a revolutionary communist society, where workers, through their party, hold state power and the power of the imagination.☺

2020: capitalism is the virus, communism is the cure

The bosses in Russia projected significant military influence in conflicts in Libya, Nagorno-Karabakh, Belarus, and Syria. History shows that declining empires do not go quietly into the night. Battle lines were noticeably hardened in the last twelve months as the imperialist bosses continued their march towards another world war.

Still, in spite of all the capitalist state-sanctioned violence, 2020 offered some clear and inspiring visions of international working-class power on display. Workers rebelled in a scope not matched in over half a century, with the fires of multiracial working-class unity striking mortal fear to the core of racist bosses across the globe.

Workers want and will fight for liberation

Members of the international communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) were proud to fight alongside our class throughout the year, receiving and giving leadership in the midst of class struggle. Our collective resolve was tested and strengthened, and we were reminded of our class's potential to run society in workers' interests, without borders, bosses, or profits. These lessons will no doubt be carried into the new year as PLP continues to win people to our international Party and a lifetime of revolutionary communist struggle.

In the early days and weeks of the pandemic, despite unknown risks, millions of working people stepped up to share resources and solidarity for



their class. Mutual aid organizations popped up all over the world and massive car caravans were organized to protest the racist outbreaks of Covid-19 exploding in the bosses' concentration camps. Workers in Haiti, a country devastated by centuries of imperialist intervention, banded together to provide public health resources, shelter, and food. Mass tenant organizations opposing evictions have gained traction in major cities.

The racist murders of Black workers Breonna Taylor and George Floyd provoked mass worker-led rebellion on a scale not witnessed since the late 1960s. Workers rebelled against a capitalist system that has no regard for our lives. Members of PLP travelled to Minneapolis, Kenosha, and Philadelphia to fight alongside our class and spread communist politics in opposition to capitalist state terror. The working class unleashed fightback in cities

such as Bogota and Lagos, where workers fearlessly squared off against the bosses' paramilitary forces.

Millions marched and took the streets from Poland to Thailand to Belarus to Chile. A general strike of 250 million workers in India—the largest in human history—demonstrated widespread opposition to pro-corporate agriculture reforms.

As communists in PLP, we are proud and inspired to fight as part of this international class struggle. We have waged an uncompromising fight to win other workers beyond the traps of identity politics, voting, and reforms. We have made modest gains in demonstrating that communist revolution through our mass Party is not only necessary, but possible.

Onward to another year of fightback

In 2021, PLP and friends of the Party will fight for what's best for our entire international working class and put communism in action through fightback and dialectical-materialist study. As the international working class heads into the next year, the stakes are undoubtedly high. The racist and sexist bosses clearly have no intention of letting up, and due to their imperialist rivalries will be forced to ramp up fascist attacks in preparation for war.

May the lessons of class struggle that we have drawn in the past year lead us forward in our fight for a world free of racism, sexism, poverty, and imperialist war! Onward to a communist future!🇸🇰



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

U.S. imperialism's doctrine of mass murder — Obama followed suit

The New Yorker - Book Review, 12/21: Asymmetric Killing: Risk Avoidance, Just War, and the Warrior Ethos by Neil Renic — For four months in 2017, an American-led coalition in Syria dropped 10,000 bombs on Raqqa....Nearly 80 percent of the city...[of 300,000] was destroyed....The scale of devastation [was] difficult to comprehend: the skeletal silhouettes of collapsed apartment buildings, the charred schools, the gaping craters.... Nobody knows how many thousands of residents died, or how many are now homeless or confined to wheelchairs....The decimation of Raqqa is unlike anything seen in an American conflict since the Second World War.

....The U.S....relied on overwhelming airpower, prosecuting the war from a safe distance. Not a single American died....But the battle for Raqqa... is the true face of modern American combat....Renic contends that the U.S., by avoiding the battlefield, has turned civilians into attractive targets.... Barack Obama writes that, as President, he wanted to save "the millions of young men" in the Muslim world....Yet he claims that, owing to...the machinery at his disposal, he ended up "killing them instead."

....The Second World War...recognized the military advantage of bombing towns and villages....Then came the nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which killed about 250,000 people. In all, Allied terror raids may have claimed some half a million civilian lives....In the Korean War, Secretary of State Dean Rusk later recalled that the U.S. had bombed "every brick that was standing on top of another, everything that moved."

...The Vietnam War...[perpetrated] such atrocities as the My Lai massacre....

[In] the...assault on Raqqa....The U.S. razed an entire city, killing thousands in the process, "without committing a single war crime."

During the summer of 2016,...Tokhar, a river-side hamlet in northern Syria....was the farthest point from a front line....On July 18,...the houses exploded....Limbs were strewn across the rubble. Children were buried under collapsed walls.

People...spent two weeks digging out bodies....

Small children were obliterated, their bodies never found....The U.S...call[ed]...Tokhar...an error, regrettable but not illegal....The Pentagon...almost always finds in its own favor....to classify atrocities like that in Tokhar as accidents.

....After 9/11, Congress passed the Authorization for the Use of Military Force, which Presidents have since invoked to justify at least thirty-seven military activities in fourteen countries, including the U.S. war in Syria.

Rich get 200 billion richer from pandemic giveaway

NYT, 12/23 — Tucked away in the 5,593-page spending bill that Congress rushed through...[is] a 200 billion giveaway to the rich....

"High-income business owners have had tax benefits and unprecedented government grants showered down on them....120 billion of the 200 billion would flow to the top one percent of Americans....[In] a classic double dip...businesses get free money from the government, then get to deduct that largess from their taxes....[And] allowing a 6.3 billion write-off for business meals, derided as the "three-martini lunch" expense

Hookworm returns via capitalism's wastewater crisis's toll in rural U.S.

NYT Book Review, 11/17 — Pamela Rush didn't get the home she deserved.

...Rush bought a trailer for about 113,000.... It had sloping floors and gaps in the walls, stuffed with rags to keep...the wild animals out.

...Out back that's where stinking raw sewage dotted with toilet paper poured out of an open pipe.

Catherine Flowers tells Rush's story in "Waste: One Woman's Fight Against America's Dirty Secret." The book spotlights...the lack of proper waste sanitation in rural America and the phenomenal toll it takes on public health and dignity. Rush's home had no septic system. It would have cost at least 15,000, a price she couldn't afford....

In Lowndes County [Alabama],...as many as 90 percent of households have failing or inadequate systems for managing waste-water. This is structural poverty...and it's hardly a localized problem. From rural Appalachia to the suburbs of St. Louis

to Allensworth, the California town that was the state's first to be founded by African-Americans.... The consequences are life-threatening, but often invisible to those who live and work in those communities with more political clout. Such conditions...have introduced hookworm to the United States, a tropical parasite thought to be eradicated from the country with the advent of modern plumbing....Researchers at Baylor College of Medicine...found evidence of hookworm in 34.5 percent of 55 people tested.

On top of that, it's not uncommon for people to face eviction and even arrest because of this scarcity of resources....The title "Waste," then, has a double meaning. It signifies both the literal fact of waste and the loss of so much time, energy, money and even lives.

U.S. invasion failed to overthrow Bolshevik revolution

NYT Book Review, 12/20, The Lenin Plot By Barnes Carr — One of the myths the United States has maintained about its relationship with Russia...[is] the invasion by American forces of northern Russia in 1918, after the Bolshevik Revolution [Ed. Note: along with 17 other capitalist countries]. But one would be hard-pressed to find anything about this conflict in official United States documents, or even American military history books.... The war was a humiliating failure....President Woodrow Wilson, supposedly a pillar of rectitude,...lied about American involvement...[and] conspired in a cover-up....

When [that] failed, the Allies began plotting the assassination of Lenin....

Then came military intervention. The United States paid vast sums to support the White forces against the Communist Reds in the civil war.... They laundered the money, paying the British and French, who passed it onto the Whites. Wilson denied it, but he fooled nobody, least of all the Russians.

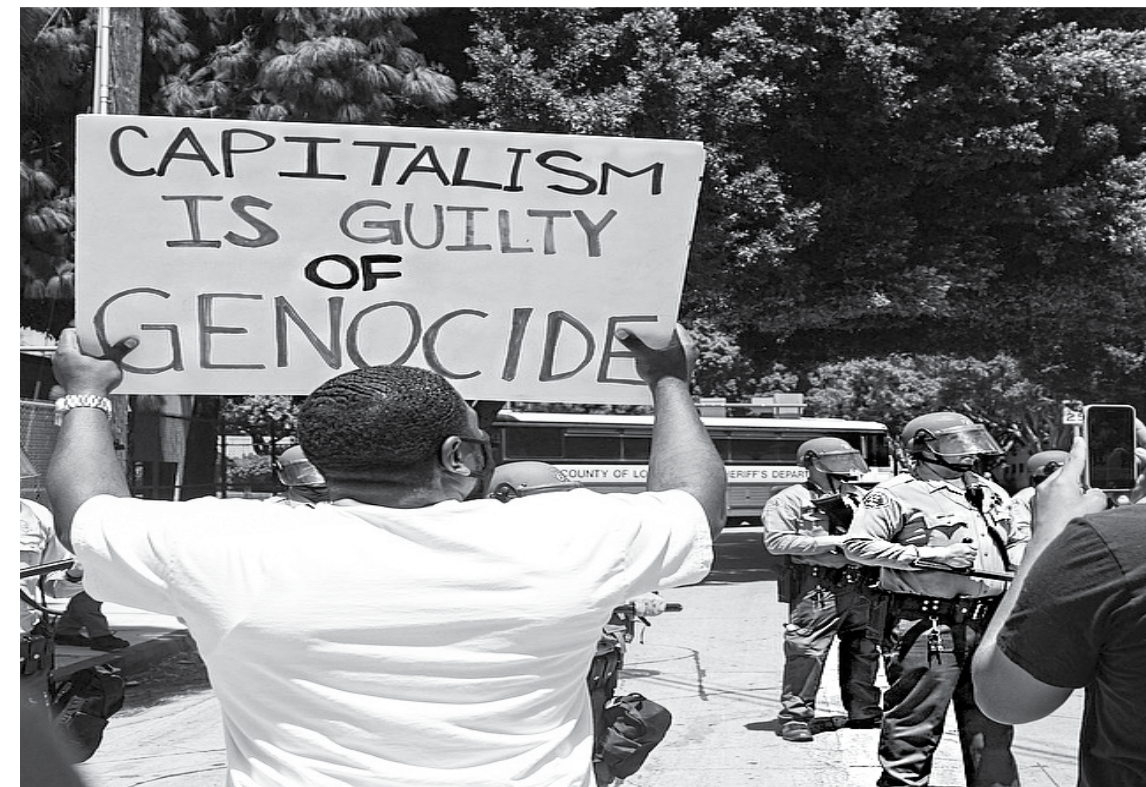
To many anti-Communists, the worst thing about the American intervention... [was] that it was entirely ineffective....But it had a hugely significant future impact. The Soviets never forgot, and for many historians this was the start of the 20th century's longest war, the Cold War.

2020

capitalism is the virus, communism is the cure



Militant demonstrations against racist police murders.



The fatal system of capitalism is in crisis and the only way a system built on profit and exploitation can be sustained is by feeding off workers. This year, workers around the world were shook up by the Covid-19 pandemic and bosses showed that there's no limit to the lengths that they will go for profit. Bosses proved that the ruling class has and will always bail out their fellow crooks, while the working class showed that whether bloody and hardly breathing we too will fight tooth and nail for the lives of workers. The Progressive Labor Party (PLP) will put communism in practice whenever we're faced with a crisis. The resounding



lesson from this year is that capitalism is the virus and communism is the cure.

The disease of capitalism kills

Bosses from China to the U.S. have used their killer kkkop attack dogs on workers, carried out racist murders, have left the most vulnerable to die unprotected and carried out inhumane evictions. As a result, nearly two million workers have died of Covid-19 and hundreds of millions more have suffered greatly—not just from Covid-19 but from this burning system of capitalism.

Although Jim Crow Joe Biden won the U.S. 2020 election, workers are still losing their jobs by the millions and bosses of all races and stripes are squabbling over what crumbs they would toss at workers. They then rescinded the offers of student loan forgiveness, closing immigrant detention centers and any other worker protections in the next breath. Meanwhile both Small and Big Fascist factions of the U.S. ruling class have agreed to bail out banks and corporations to the tune of trillions of dollars.

Heading into 2021, there's a race between bosses around the world for the vaccine. The lack of equal access to the vaccine and floundering international influence means workers will still lose and the bosses' racism means Black, Latin and Asian workers will be attacked the hardest. This year has only increased the urgency for workers to unite on the job, and in our neighborhoods and schools to fight back and build a communist movement.

Ascendant China, resurging Russia fill void

Throughout the pandemic, with brute force, militarized policing, and silencing tactics against whistleblowing doctors, bosses in China have clamped down on the coronavirus outbreak and used the lockdowns to enhance their economic position. In the wake of president Donald Trump sabotaging multiple international trade agreements, China's bosses announced a 25-year bilateral deal with Iran in August, followed by the massive Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in league with fourteen other Asian-Pacific nations.

Continued on page 7

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